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RUPEE SERIES



BHAVAN'S BOOK UNIVERSITY

**WHAT LIFE HAS
TAUGHT ME**

SERIES II

GENERAL EDITORS

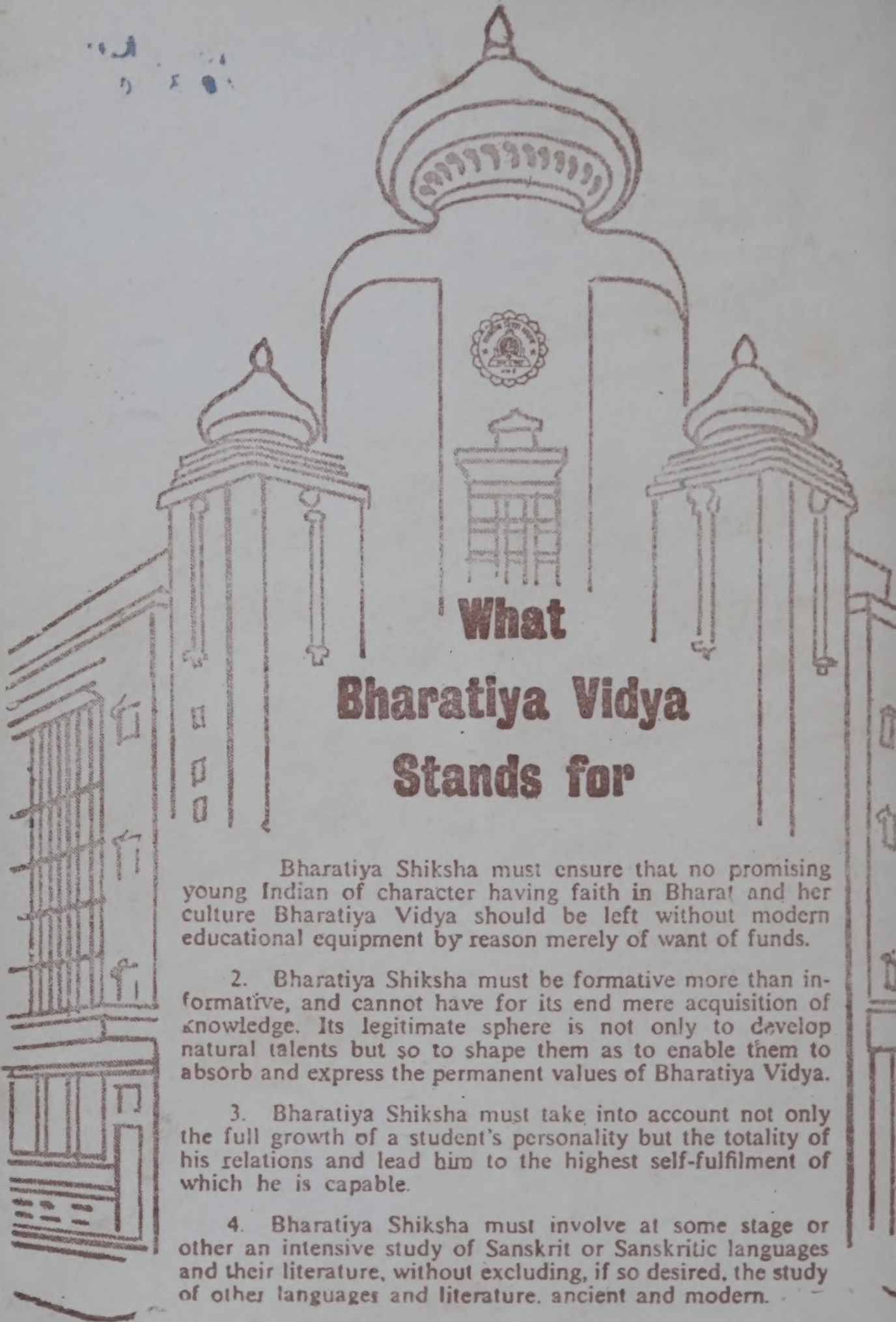
K. M. MUNSHI

R. R. DIWAKAR

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BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN BOMBAY



What Bharatiya Vidya Stands for

Bharatiya Shiksha must ensure that no promising young Indian of character having faith in Bharat and her culture Bharatiya Vidya should be left without modern educational equipment by reason merely of want of funds.

2. Bharatiya Shiksha must be formative more than informative, and cannot have for its end mere acquisition of knowledge. Its legitimate sphere is not only to develop natural talents but so to shape them as to enable them to absorb and express the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya.

3. Bharatiya Shiksha must take into account not only the full growth of a student's personality but the totality of his relations and lead him to the highest self-fulfilment of which he is capable.

4. Bharatiya Shiksha must involve at some stage or other an intensive study of Sanskrit or Sanskritic languages and their literature, without excluding, if so desired, the study of other languages and literature, ancient and modern.

5. The re-integration of Bharatiya Vidya, which is the primary object of Bharatiya Shiksha, can only be attained through a study of forces, movements, motives, iddas, forms and art of creative life-energy through which it has expressed itself in different ages as a single continuous process.

6. Bharatiya Shiksha must stimulate the student's power of expression, both written and oral, at every stage in accordance with the highest ideals attained by the great literary masters in the intellectual and moral spheres.

7. The technique of Bharatiya Shiksha must involve—

(a) the adoption by the teacher of the *Guru* attitude which consists in taking a personal interest in the student; inspiring and encouraging him to achieve distinction in his studies; entering into his life with a view to form ideals and remove psychological obstacles; and creating in him a spirit of consecration; and

(b) the adoption by the student of the *Shishya* attitude by the development of—

(i) respect for the teacher,

(ii) a spirit of inquiry,

(iii) a spirit of service towards the teacher, the institution, Bharat and Bharatiya Vidya.

8. The ultimate aim of Bharatiya Shiksha is to teach the younger generation to appreciate and live up to the permanent values of Bharatiya Vidya which flowing from the supreme art of creative life-energy as represented by Shri Ramachandra, Shri Krishna, Vyasa, Buddha and Mahavira have expressed themselves in modern times in the life of Shri Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Swami Dayananda Saraswati, and Swami Vivekananda, Shri Aurobindo and Mahatma Gandhi.

9. Bharatiya Shiksha while equipping the student with every kind of scientific and technical training must teach the student, not to sacrifice an ancient form or attitude to an unreasoning passion for change; not to retain a form or attitude which in the light of modern times can be replaced by another form or attitude which is a truer and more effective expression of the spirit of Bharatiya Vidya; and to capture the spirit afresh for each generation to present it to the world.



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आ नो भद्राः क्रतवो यन्तु विश्वतः ।

Let noble thoughts come to us from every side

—Rigveda, I-89-i

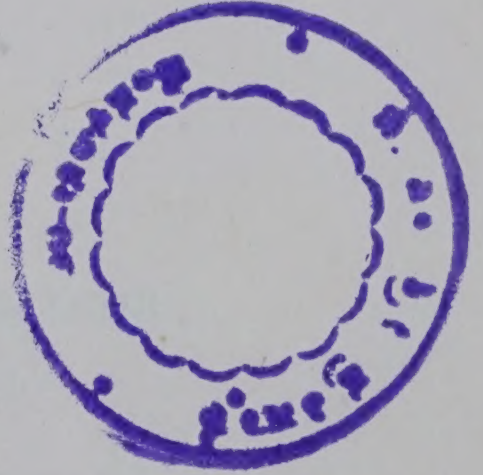
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General Editors

K. M. MUNSHI

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WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME

SERIES II

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WHAT LIFE HAS TAUGHT ME

SERIES II



1964

BHARATIYA VIDYA BHAVAN

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GENERAL EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bhavan's Book University volumes had rare success. About a million and a quarter volumes have been sold in about eleven years. However, there is an insistent demand for the stray volumes which the Bhavan has issued from time to time at a lower price. In order to meet this demand, it has been decided to issue the new One-Rupee Book University Series side by side with the Book University Series.

I hope this new One-Rupee Series will have the same good fortune which the other Series had, of being useful to those who are interested in the fundamental values of Indian Culture, and of reaching out to a wider audience.

Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan,
Chowpatty Road, Bombay-7.
Vijaya Dashami
September 28, 1963

K. M. MUNSHI

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

Some years ago, the *Bhavan's Journal* conceived the idea of requesting eminent Indians, who have made their mark in the secular and in the spiritual fields, to tell the readers of the *Journal* 'What Life Has Taught Me'. The request was made to a fair cross section of our countrymen. It was quite a casual list of persons who were approached for this purpose and it was not done on any pre-meditated principle of inclusion or exclusion. The list included Sages and Saints, Politicians and Administrators, Lawyers and Judges, Army men and Film magnates.

It is gratifying to record that all those who were requested to write for us responded with pleasing promptness and generous warmth so eloquent of their goodwill for the *Journal*. For this, the *Bhavan's Journal* is very grateful. The contributions were serialised in it. Included among them were extracts from the writings of two leading thinkers of the West, Albert Schweitzer and Pitirim Sorokin. In this and its companion volume all these have been re-printed and issued together.

All the contributors have been very candid in the narration of their experiences and unsparing in their criticism of themselves. In writings of this kind, there is bound to be a measure of the didactic; and, that would appear to be necessary if others wish to learn from the failures and successes of those who review and reminisce about their past. However, the life-situations which project these

lessons are invested with a realism which would surely interest the reader, amusing him in not a few cases.

If, benefitting by the experiences of those who appear in these volumes, one is helped to go through life reflectively and purposefully, the publishers will feel amply rewarded.

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H. H. JAGADGURU SRI SANKARACHARYA OF KANCHI

Doctor Munshi's call to express "What life has taught me", for which gratitude is due to him, has set me at least to think, if any lesson has been learnt by me in my span of life.

I feel, however, that though life is incessantly trying to teach me new lessons, I have learnt none. For, all my observations have been, by nature, only superficial which trait no amount of varied experiences in life has succeeded in correcting.

The first two experiences remembered as having occurred in the third or fourth year of my life, are dreadful to think, as they were interwoven with temptation, greed, avarice, deceit, groaning, loss, lamentation and the like.

A '*mara naai*' as they call it in Tamil or teddy cat (an animal which generally climbs on trees and destroys the fruits during nights) somehow got into a room in the house and thrust its head into a small copper pot with a neck, which was kept in a sling and contained jaggery. The animal was not able to pull out its head and was running here and there in the room all through the night. People in the house and neighbours were aroused by the noise and thought that some thief was at his job. But, the incessant noise continued even till morning hours, and some bravados armed with sticks opened the door of the room and found the greedy animal. It was roped and tied to a pillar. Some experienced men were brought and after being en-

gaged in a tug-of-war, they ultimately succeeded in removing the vessel from the head of the animal. The animal was struggling for life. It was at last removed to some spot to roam freely, I presume. The first experience of my life was this dreadful ocular demonstration born of greed causing all our neighbours to spend an anxious and sleepless night.

The next experience was a man in the street who entered into the house seeing me alone with tiny golden bangles upon which he began to lay his hands. I asked him to tighten the hooks of the bangles which had become loose and gave a peremptory and authoritative direction to him to bring it back repaired without delay. The man took my orders most obediently and took leave of me with the golden booty. In glee of having arranged for repairs to my ornament, I speeded to inform my people inside of the arrangement made by me with the man in the street who gave his name as Ponnusami. The people inside hurried to the street to find out the culprit. But the booty had become his property true to his assumed name, Ponnusami (master of gold).

These two experiences at a tender innocent age are recurring successively in some form or other even at this tottering age, nearing seventy, of being liable to be duped or eager to get by some short cut some material gain.

In attempting to judge the objective world with this rod of selfishness and superficiality of mine which has rightly earned me the reputation of being a clever Swami, I am prone to come to the con-

clusion that there lives none without predominantly selfish motives.

But with years rolling on, an impression, that too a superficial one true to my nature, is dawning upon me that there breathe on this globe some souls firmly rooted in morals and ethics who live exclusively for others voluntarily forsaking not only their material gains and comforts but also their own *sadhana* towards their spiritual improvements.

In the beginning of the year 1907, when I was studying in a Christian Mission School at Tindivanam, a town in the South Arcot District, I heard one day that the Sankaracharya of Kamakoti Peetha who was amidst us in our town in the previous year, attained siddhi at Kalavai, a village about 10 miles from Arcot and 25 miles from Kanchipuram. Information was received that a maternal cousin of mine who, after some study in *Rig Veda* had joined the camp of the Acharya offering his services to him, was installed on the Peetha.

He was the only son of the widowed and destitute sister of my mother and there was not a soul in the camp to console her. At this juncture, my father who was a supervisor of schools in the Tindivanam Taluk, planned to proceed with his family to Kalavai, some 60 miles from Tindivanam in his own touring bullock cart. But on account of an educational conference at Trichinopoly, he cancelled the programme.

My mother with myself and other children started for Kalavai to console her sister on her son assuming the sannyasa asrama. We travelled by rail to Kanchipuram, and halted at the Sankaracharya Mutt there. I had my ablution at the

Kumara Koshta Tirtha. A carriage of the Mutt had come there from Kalavai with persons to buy articles for the Maha Pooja on 10th day after the passing away of the late Acharya Paramaguru. But one of them, a hereditary *maistry* of the Mutt, asked me to accompany him. A separate cart was engaged for the rest of the family to follow me.

During our journey, the *maistry* hinted to me that I might not return home and that the rest of my life might have to be spent in the Mutt itself! At first I thought that my elder cousin having become the Head of the Mutt, it might have been his wish that I was to live with him. I was then only thirteen years of age and so I wondered as to what use I might be to him in the institution.

But the *maistry* gradually began to clarify as miles rolled on, that the Acharya, my cousin in the poorvashrama, had fever which developed into delirium and that was why I was being separated from the family to be quickly taken to Kalavai. He told me that he was commissioned to go to Tindivanam itself and fetch me, but he was able to meet me at Kanchipuram itself. I was stunned with this unexpected turn of events. I lay in a kneeling posture in the cart itself, shocked as I was, repeating RAMA RAMA, the only spiritual prayer I knew, during the rest of the journey.

My mother and the other children came some time later only to find that instead of her mission of consoling her sister, she herself was placed in the state of having to be consoled by someone else!

My robes of sannyasa were not the result of any renunciation on my part, nor had I the advantage of living under a Guru for any length of time. I

was surrounded from the very first day of sannyasa by all the comforts and responsibilities of a gorgeous court.

But, it so happened that Tummuluru Ramakrishnayya and Adayappalam Pasupati Iyer, both of them serving in the District Court of South Arcot and ardent disciples of my Guru's Guru, were there in Kalavai when I took sannyasa asrama. Later, it became clear that they were determined to help me to mould my life in my youth.

Ramakrishnayya being worried by a lot of family burdens, in spite of his detached mentality, it fell to the lot of Pasupati to shoulder the task. Pasupati devoted most of his leisure to solitary meditation and reading Vedanta Prakaranas or Treatises of Sri Sankaracharya.

Such a man retired from Government service soon after my ascending the Gadi and lived with me always, watching my every action, speech and twinkling of the eye. He even curtailed his meditation in order to devote some time to the supervision of the secular administration of the Mutt.

He would meet me in private periodically, point out every item of weakness he had observed during the intervening period and implore me to heed to his suggestions to overcome them. When he had sometimes to be very harsh, he would tell me that for all these *aparadhas* he was committing towards one of a higher asrama, he would make amends when I grew up as a full-fledged saint.

He used to persuade every day every friend of his to turn his mind to self-introspection and would argue with him freely as to what permanent values he had gained by being materialistic and

would bluntly point out to every one of them his points of weakness and ask him to ponder whether the remedies contained in the Upanishads and Sankara's Prakaranas might not be given a trial.

He would meet even unacquainted persons in the street and enquire into their worries and woes and would succeed in transforming them into true devotees of God, true followers of Vedanta and true *sishyas* of Sankara.

He lived close by me partaking in my Sankara Bhashya Patha till 1926, for a period of 18 years. He lived for my sake in Kumbakonam famous for its mosquitoes and elephantiasis and became a victim of filariasis and fever. Nevertheless, he would not leave me.

When he was bed-ridden in his house at Cuddalore for some months, it so happened that I was received in Cuddalore in the course of my tour and when my procession was going on in the town, he patted the Mutt elephant. He breathed his last the same night.

His was a life lived with intense love for others without the least reaction of fear or favour.

When on tour in Trichinopoly District in 1923, I halted at a village when I heard a girl of about twelve admonishing her younger brother for his having uttered an untruth. Her advocacy of truth and her love for her brother which prompted her to see that he was not spoiled, far surpassed a saint's direction. I cannot forget this incident after the lapse of so many years.

When touring in Kerala, I happened to camp in a public halting place where in one room some elderly Namboodiri Brahmins were talking toge-

ther. One of them opened his *puja* box in order to begin his *puja*, but, nevertheless, took part in the gossip. After some time he realized his mistake and turned his attention to the *puja*, but wound up the box and exclaimed that owing to his having taken part in the gossip, his inner efforts to secure the mental equilibrium required for God's *puja* had failed and rather than making a show of *puja* without inner equilibrium, he would not perform the *puja* that day.

This incident which is fresh in my memory spells honesty of purpose in one's own religious pursuits.

In 1929, I met a Sannyasi in a border village of North Arcot. He knew neither Tamil nor Telugu. He knew only Marathi and Hindi. He told us that he travelled to Rameshwaram by rail and lost his danda during the journey. He probably fasted till the taking of a new danda. He was duly given a consecrated danda. From that time he regarded me as his Guru, because I saved his Asrama Dharma. He was then more than eighty years old. He refused to leave me till 1945 when he attained siddhi.

Soon after he joined us during the Chaturmasya of 1929, I was laid up with malarial fever for about 40 days. Till then none was in the habit of touching me. But then I was not able to stand or walk without help. This new old man, being a Sannyasi, took upon himself the duty of helping me.

He was a very hot-tempered man. His voice was authoritative. He was a dread to all in the vicinity. He had been in the Revenue Department in the Dewas State in Central India. Neither Nanasaheb

nor Jhansi Rani could compete with him in his authoritativeness.

On no day would he fail to do *puja* to my feet and none could deter him from his purpose. Tears would roll down his face during this *puja*.

Once in Kanchi, a relative of his, who had been on *yatra*, came to me and after talking to him, returned to me and took me to task. He expressed wonder how I could be so cold without the least reciprocity towards one, nearing the 100th year, who regarded me as his sole spiritual refuge high above any God. My natural superficiality did not react even to this admonition.

Once we had been to Tirupati. The aged Swami was then in our camp. I went up the hill to worship Balaji. Just as I was returning from the temple after Balaji darsan, the aged Sannyasi who had managed to arrive at the top of the hill confronted us. The temple authorities, in deference to his old age, *ashrama* and connection with our Mutt, offered to arrange for his *darsan* of Balaji. He fell at my feet and exclaimed: "This is Balaji. Pardon me I cannot accept your offer". He returned without Balaji's darsan.

I came into contact with two other persons, both of them quite in contrast with this old man. They were not acquainted with each other and were removed by 30 years of time; but they thought and acted on the same lines.

They were full of ecstasy in the adoration of my feet, absorbed in thoughts of me all day and night, which, they told me, gave them immeasurable strength to bear any calamity or temptation very lightly. But, when they came to know of my

shortcomings and natural unsteadiness, not only did they discontinue their worship of my feet but also did their best to prevent anyone from gaining access to my feet as they thought that adoration of my feet by devotees contributed in a degree to my limitation.

They too renounced all other responsibilities of their life and resolved to spend the rest of their life in either entreating and imploring me or being engaged in austerities and prayers for my correction.

Life has taught me only this, "God has created some souls to live for others only."



GURDIAL MALLIK

Life is a school, which is always in session. In it, the best teachers are Intuition and Experience, while Observation and Reason are their valuable allies in instructing the students of all ages and outlooks and attitudes.

In this school the instruction imparted is both plentiful and pregnant. But every student can imbibe only a very small fraction of it, and that too, according to his own capacity, conditioned chiefly by the degree and depth of the residue intelligence brought over from the previous incarnation.

Therefore, what I have learnt, often to the accompaniment of travail and tears, from Life—which, in its very nature, is limitless—is extremely limited and little. But before I put it down in words—an inadequate vehicle, indeed, when compared with the truth they try to express—I should first like to bow in gratitude to my many Teachers, including, of course, Tradition.

From my mother I acquired faith in and devotion to God. From my father I learnt the value and worthwhileness of self-discipline and sense of duty. My instructors in the school and college inculcated in me the habit of sustained and steadfast study while my fellow-students taught me some of the pivotal principles of the community life. My colleagues in the field of diversified activity later revealed to me the beauty of the “cadence of comradeship.”

But I owe much more to my Gurudeva Rabin-dranath Tagore. He imbued me effectively with the truth of his own words in *Gitanjali*: "When one knows Thee, then alien there is none." Gandhiji revealed to me at once the might and meekness of Love. From C. F. Andrews I learnt to love the people specially the poor and the students. Dr. Annie Besant taught me the secret of translating the ideal of Universal Brotherhood in my own life *via* the study of the various religions. To Jamshed Nusserwanji Mehta of Karachi, I owe the inspiration to strive to lead a ceaseless life of self-abnegation. Sri Nandalal Bose, the great artist, initiated me into the art of sensing beauty in the commonplace as well as the chaste. To Sri Kshitis Mohan Sen—an acknowledged authority on Medieval Mysticism in India—I am indebted for seeking in the company of saints like Kabir, Ravidas, Raj-iabji and others and also in that of the *Bauls*, the mystics of East Bengal, the "dust of divinity," which dissolves the delusion of duality. Shri M. C. Setalvad, the Attorney-General of India, has been to me a shining example of integrity and industry, while his good wife has indicated to me the utter need and urgency of the passion for self-culture for finding "the Kingdom of Heaven," now and here, on this earth, in the midst of our own environment. There are also many other persons who have taught me concretely a number of varieties and values of life. To all of them, I am deeply beholden.

In short, life has taught me first, how to envisage heavenly harmony and unity and, secondly, to translate this vision and value in my social sur-

roundings, often riddled as these are with discord and diversity. For learning this lesson of lessons, I have been ever grateful to God. For had He not granted me the most precious gift of human life, I would never have learnt this lesson. Therefore, to-day I can answer unhesitatingly and in the affirmative the question, "Is Life Worth Living?" And, verily, a man who has finally succeeded in sensing and then in striving to live by affirming the worthwhileness of life despite its endless pains and privations, punctuated periodically, no doubt, with spells of joy and self-fulfilment, has known *what it is to live*, as contradistinguished from mere existence.

It is said that experience is the name men give to their follies or sorrows. I do not myself accept this statement as entirely correct. In remembering one's past days one need not have to brood over one's follies or sorrows. Surely there are pleasant patches in one's life about which one can think in retrospect or speak, and such a recital of one's experience might prove of some interest and even profit to him who remembers, as well as others.

I passed the Indian Civil Service open competition examination in London in 1921 and joined my first post as Assistant Commissioner, Akola, Berar, on the 15th August 1922. Akola was considered a "hot spot", the temperature often running to 118 or 119 degrees, and on the P & O steamer "Caledonia" by which I returned to India, I was the recipient of much commiseration from my fellow passengers when they knew where I was going, particularly the Britishers who were returning to their jobs in India either in Government service or trade and business.

The year 1921 in which I passed the ICS examination might justifiably be described as a "vintage year," as most of those who passed out that year had a distinguished career in the Civil Service and rose to occupy much coveted posts in their later life: to mention only some names, Sri K. P. S. Menon (our Ambassador at Moscow), Sri N. R. Pillai (Secretary-General, Ministry of External

Affairs), Sri B. R. Sen (Director-General of FAO), Sri Sukumar Sen (Election Commissioner) and Sri Venkatachar (President's Secretary—now our High Commissioner in Canada).

I reported myself at the Bombay Secretariat to the Resident Deputy Secretary who was an ICS officer by the name of Hugh Dow (later Sir Hugh Dow, Governor of Bihar and Sind in undivided India). In years to come I was actually to work under him for a fairly long period as Deputy Secretary and Joint Secretary when he became Secretary to the Government of India in the Commerce Department.

I still remember the day I climbed up the steps of the overhead bridge at Akola railway station and trudged along to the platform on the other side. I was the first in my family, for at least three generations, to enter Government service and, as I walked along, wondered to myself what life had in store for me. A ramshackle car was waiting for me to take me to the Deputy Commissioner's Bungalow (there were no Collectors in the old C. P. Commission which included Berar; being a non-Regulation province these officers were known as Deputy Commissioners). My first Deputy Commissioner was a Scotchman. Both he and his wife were a pleasant couple. They did not put me up at their house as the very next morning the Governor of C. P., Sir Frank Sly, was paying his cold weather visit to Akola and he and the Commissioner, Berar, were the guests of the Deputy Commissioner and his wife. I was therefore put up in a tent not very far away and for about a week I had all my meals with them. There was a great personal

tragedy in the Deputy Commissioner's life, so he retired prematurely. It may be because of this or some other circumstances that he did not have much heart in his work and was inclined to be easy-going. He was never considered as an effective or an efficient officer.

The Akola station of those days was not much different from other stations, although, chiefly on account of the climate, it was by no means popular among British officers. Being a great cotton producing centre, it had an importance of its own and was considered a rich district. The four districts of Berar in those days—Akola, Amraoti, Yeotmal and Buldhana—paid in land revenue an amount equal to what was paid by the whole of the Central Provinces. The station, as usual was divided into the so-called "civil station," the various "peths" and "bustees." "Jatharpeth" which was rising fast and named after an Indian Commissioner who was a distinguished member of the old uncovenanted Civil Service, was the modern part of the town mostly occupied by lawyers and other prosperous professional men. There were two clubs, one an English club where the only Indian members were myself and the Dasturs, a rich Parsi family, and the other an Indian club called the Mitra Samaj. I was a member of both the clubs and, as in those days I played a good game of tennis, I was much in demand at both the clubs.

While it was true that my first Deputy Commissioner was a pleasant person to deal with, I would not apply that description to some of the Deputy Commissioners who succeeded him. Indeed, a number of them were harsh, ill-tempered,

exacting officers whom at times I immensely disliked in those days when some arguments which I considered unpleasant from my own personal point of view took place. Nevertheless, looking back upon those days, I feel I owe a great deal to all of them and to one of them particularly who was perhaps the worst of the whole lot. Although I was sure then, that they felt, in return, an equally strong dislike for me, I was agreeably surprised to learn from a reliable source later on—some one who had occasion to see my confidential reports—that most of them had actually thought and spoken well of me.

This particular Deputy Commissioner, who I said was the worst of the whole lot from the temperamental angle, was very keen on teaching me my job and he made it a practice to call me up with all my pending cases and other work to his house every Monday morning at 9 a.m. to make sure that I become well versed in the mysteries of the various laws and procedures. Some of the lessons which I learnt from him, either directly or indirectly, come back to my mind. He impressed on me the importance of analysing every problem and every situation that may be facing me, by framing, mentally, a series of issues. He exhorted me to put to myself the question "Is it true that" on every occasion that I had to make up my mind about anything in dispute. For instance, if there was an allegation that A beat B, with a view to find out whether that was correct and what were the circumstances in which the beating took place, I had to put a series of "Is it true" questions to myself and group the evidence round them. I must admit that, actually, I never repeated the "Is it true that" incantation.

but his advice taught me, as time went on, to itemise things and pick out the essentials in regard to various cases that used to come up before me for decision. He always told me to take a problem to bits and try and solve each bit separately and then see how far these solutions hang together, and build them up again into a final solution of the main problem. He even insisted on physical application of this method. For instance, there was an election to the local Legislative Council of those days, and in Akola, a politically minded constituency where he and I were the returning officers, the voting was brisk and active and a very large number of votes were cast. Eventually a very large number of voting papers had to be counted. I started picking out of a huge sack of the voting papers and then counting and totalling them up, noting the totals on a piece of paper. He stopped me from doing so and made me count them in bunches of ten, and when a hundred were counted up in this fashion, fresh voting papers were taken out and disposed of. This helped me to count the votes quickly and methodically, and as they were in groups of tens and hundreds, the counting became easy and automatic.

Another point he always insisted on was to cut out lengthy and discursive replies. He insisted on short, almost terse and "to the point" replies to any references that may come up to the District from the Nagpur Secretariat or elsewhere. His admonition against lengthy replies was inspired by the fear that in writing at length you only exposed a large surface for attack and got into further entanglements.

Another lesson which he taught me was never to utter a threat or make a promise which I could not carry out. Considering how lightly people in our country promise each other to do this or that, or threaten each other with all kinds of dire consequences on the slightest provocation, this advice has, in my view, a special value of its own.

But, above all things, he attached priority No. 1 to prompt and effective disposal of whatever bit of work came up. His characteristic warning was "Never let work grow under your feet and never allow yourself to be bogged". His view was that, even if a wrong decision was taken, there were appellate and other similar authorities to put matters right, but, apart from this, there could always be three or four correct answers to a problem which people according to their different temperaments or background could offer. It did not make the slightest difference to history, according to him, which answer was given, but whichever answer was given it should be given promptly and effectively so that people were left in no doubt about its meaning and did not have to hang about your court or office for an unnecessarily long time.

I have endeavoured throughout my career to practise these precepts. Although all my experience has been confined to Government service and administrative work, I think these lessons are full of sound commonsense and could be put to good use in any walk of life. If any of my young readers about to embark on their career in any field of activity should find them useful and practise them successfully, these brief reminiscences will have served their purpose.

My working life has been mostly concerned with law, law courts, litigation and lawyers. My lessons, therefore, are naturally derived from my experiences as a practising lawyer for just over twenty years and as a Judge for about eighteen years. But looking back, I find that the fundamentals of one's character and way of life are truly traced to what one had learnt most during the formative period of one's life.

When I was about twelve years of age, I was selected for reciting a well-known English poem, Longfellow's "Psalm of life," on an occasion which was then considered to be historic, namely, the visit of the Commissioner of the Division to our school. While learning by heart the "Psalm of Life" even at that early age, some of the lines of that poem left an indelible impression on my mind and character. All my life the following lines have been fresh in my memory:

"Trust no Future however pleasant,
Let the Dead Past bury its dead,
Act, act in the Living Present,
Heart within and God o'rhead."

This lesson learnt very early in life was very much reinforced by my weekly attendance at the lectures on the *Gita* which used to be delivered every Sunday afternoon by a very great Sanskrit scholar and learned lawyer, the late Sri Mangal Charan of hallowed memory, the eldest brother

of my friend, Sri Mahabir Prasad, the present Advocate-General of Bihar. Even now the majestic figure of the late Sri Mangal Charan delivering his weekly addresses at Joda Mandir, as it is called in my home town Arrah, comes vividly before my mind's eye and I distinctly remember him laying great stress upon Karma Yoga—*do your assigned duty as best as you can without looking forward to your reward.*

With a view to becoming a teacher in the Government College at Patna, which is my *alma mater*, I had taken a good Honours Degree and later the M.A. Degree in History in 1921, but those were the days when Mahatma Gandhi was preaching his cult of non-co-operation and asking Government servants to give up their service and to devote their time to winning Swaraj. His preachings in Patna had a tremendous effect in the years 1920-21. I for one decided not to think of Government service. That decision was made early in 1921. When I had just appeared for the Final Law Examination in July 1922, one of my contemporaries who also had taken the same examination put to me a very direct question. We were in his ancestral house in a big hall with many almirahs full of law books and law reports belonging to his late father and subsequently to his elder brother who had died rather very young, but had attained distinction in the practice of law in the Calcutta High Court and subsequently come to Patna when the Patna High Court was created in 1916. My friend asked me what I intended doing after taking my Law degree. Without a moment's hesitation I informed him that I intended to set up

practice in the Patna High Court as a Vakil, as practitioners in the High Court, not being Barristers, were then called. He was rather taken aback by this unhesitating answer and he explained his surprise by pointing out that I had no friends or relations in the High Court or even one volume of law report with which to start my practice. He pointed out the big library and the large clientele which his father and his elder brother had left for him. He further observed that with all those advantages of a large clientele and a big library and a lot of goodwill, he was not so decided in his mind as I was. I was a little impudent in asking him whether his father, when he started his practice in the Calcutta High Court, had any relations or friends or a big library with which to start his practice. He said his father had started on a clean slate. I at once pointed out to him that I too wished to start on a clean slate as his father had done and then I pointed out to him the above-quoted lines of the poet and told him that I wished to start "Heart within and God overhead."

After passing the viva voce test, then called the Chamber Examination, held by two Judges of the Patna High Court, I got enrolled as a Vakil of the Patna High Court on December 15, 1922, but I started my practice seriously after my return from the Gaya Session of the Indian National Congress which was presided over by the late Sri C. R. Das and after having functioned as one of the captains of the volunteers serving the Congress there for about ten days. I really started my practice in January 1923 without any friend or relation to help me in the beginning, though later I made many

friends at the Bar, of whom I distinctly remember three, who were very kind to me, namely, (1) Shiveshwar Dayal, who died rather young while holding the responsible position of the Government Pleader of the High Court, (2) Sri Shambhu Saran who also very early in life succeeded to the large practice of Rajendra Babu, and (3) Sri Nirsu Narain Sinha, who was then the Leader of the Opposition in the Bihar Legislature constituted under the Montague-Chelmsford Reforms Act, and who later became a Member of the Executive Council of the Governor of Bihar. All these three gentlemen, though not the leaders of the Bar, were occupying prominent places as leaders amongst the junior section of the Bar. They were very busy practitioners and I used to volunteer my services to them in getting up their cases without any expectation of fees. I felt beholden to them that they gave me so many opportunities of arguing their overflow briefs at a time when no paying litigant would entrust his brief to me. But whether it was a paid brief or a transferred brief without any fee, I certainly did all I could to present the case as best as I could. Thus my reward was that I acquired the reputation of a junior who took to his work seriously. That was a great achievement in itself.

I learnt very early in the course of my practice at the Bar that a litigant was not the least concerned with the caste, creed or colour of the lawyer he should choose. What concerned him most was how to achieve success in his litigation. Thus I found that even my relations would not think of engaging me even as a junior in their cases, because they were not sure of me. They naturally and

rightly engaged better qualified and senior practitioners at the Bar if they had to pay a fee. They would come to me only if my engagement meant no expense to them in money. Even then I found reasons to be thankful to them, because they had entrusted their brief to me. For a beginner in the profession of law the opportunity to learn work or to argue cases is itself a great advantage.

During my school days I had written an essay on "Knowledge is Power." I found the truth of that saying fully illustrated in my practice at the Bar. In order to succeed at the Bar one has to have full confidence in oneself. Such a confidence comes only if one is fully prepared with the facts of the case and the law bearing on those facts. That comes only by hard work. In the ultimate analysis, therefore, the most essential condition for success at the Bar is hard work and perseverance. Very early in my life as a practising lawyer I discovered that practitioners who were not well posted with the facts of their case or with the law on the subject fared rather badly when they stood up to argue their side of the case, even though they justly enjoyed the reputation of being good public speakers. It is not my attempt here to set out the conditions for success at the Bar in all aspects. I have just indicated what I learnt as one of the lessons of my career at the Bar, the hard way.

I have already indicated that I had no close friends or relations at the Bar to help me at the Bar. On the contrary, my experience also is that having such friends and relations at the Bar is not always a help. Very often it is a hindrance. I have known some leading members of the Bar

whose sons or sons-in-law or nephews did not do well at the Bar, though otherwise qualified, perhaps because they depended too much on what they considered to be their initial advantage. It may be said without fear of contradiction that oftener than not the relations of successful practitioners at the Bar have failed to do well at the Bar.

In this connection I would make another observation which, I think, is well-founded. In order that the foundations of a successful legal practice may be well and truly laid, a practitioner has to learn his law the hard way. I found in my practice that every case handled by me taught me something new. In other words, not only sound theoretical knowledge of law is essential to the making of a successful lawyer, but, also actual practice at the Bar. Experience of actual practice at the Bar, therefore, cannot be dispensed with.

Another aspect of a struggling junior's practice at the Bar may also be indicated for the benefit of those who have set up practice without much capital to back them up during the early years of struggle at the Bar. There used to be a belief that, in order to succeed at the Bar, one must put up a show, that is to say, should have a motor car for a conveyance, a nice bungalow for residence, and the rest of it. But I am happy to record this as my experience that such notions are not well-founded. During my time generally, even struggling juniors used to go to Court on a hired conveyance like a phaeton or a hackney carriage. When I started my practice, my elder brother, who was the head of the family, proposed to place Rs. 2,500 at my disposal which was enough in the year 1923 to

purchase a new car so that I should, according to his ideas, start as a respectable practitioner. But I refused that offer, because I thought I should try to stand on my own feet and I decided that I should not have a car until I could afford to purchase one out of my own earnings, and that I did about five years later. I started going to Court on a bicycle. I distinctly remember that some members of the Vakils' Association, as it was then called, were a little disturbed by my starting this practice of cycling to the High Court, but ultimately I succeeded in convincing them that those objections were born of a false sense of prestige.

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The great and learned profession of law, to which I have the honour to belong, teaches its members the admirable virtue of patience. Ordinarily, one is inclined to be impatient with an adversary, or even with one who may be one's paymaster. We do not easily suffer fools, but the great profession of law rounds off our oddities and by rubbing shoulders very often with one's superiors in wisdom and learning, one learns to give respect where it is due, and to have patience with all with whom the professional life brings one into close touch. Very often with lack of experience of men and affairs, a young lawyer is apt to lose patience with a litigant who is rather importunate in pressing upon the attention of his lawyer, a cause which the latter may not be inclined to take up because in his view the litigant had no case. The litigant, on the other hand, is so full of his case and the justice of his cause, that he insists on placing papers and documents before his legal adviser which the latter is inclined to brush aside as irrelevant and against the

viewpoint of his client. Very often a lawyer has to meet on the opposite side a fellow-practitioner who is inclined to be longwinded and to indulge in trivialities. He has to bear with all these and sometimes he has to place his case before a Judge who may not be quick enough to appreciate his viewpoint. A lawyer has, therefore, to learn *willy-nilly* the great virtue of patience with all with whom his professional life may bring him into close touch.

Another great virtue that a busy practitioner learns in the Courts of Law is the *Gita* attitude, namely, the lawyer comes to learn in due course, that his part is to do his best for his client, to present his client's case in the best light, to interpret disputed documents in the way most favourable to his client's cause and very often to explain away inconvenient situations. But after he has done all that, he has to leave the case to the best judgment of the presiding Judge or the Judges who have heard the case, and his client to his luck. Thus he develops an attitude of detachment and unconcern about the ultimate result. So long as he has done his best, it does not matter to him in what way the verdict of the jury or the judgment of the Judge goes. But this attitude of mind naturally takes time to develop and it comes only after one has laboured hard in the cause of one's clients and after one had known bitter disappointments, especially during the earlier and less mature years in the profession. But in the end he does learn 'to labour and to wait.'

SUKUMAR SEN

Life is indeed a hard school and many are the lessons that it has to teach one. The lessons that any particular individual imbibes from life are, however, largely subjective inasmuch as his mental make-up and general attitude to life are important factors which determine what he can learn from the life he has lived. Moreover, human experience never comes to an end until death, so that life has fresh lessons to teach one until the very last breath almost.

Here are some of the lessons that I have learnt from life:

The fundamental question that arises for consideration is what does one expect from life? Different answers to this question would be suggested by different individuals—riches, comfort, success, power or something else. All these alternative answers might, however, be covered by a single comprehensive one—"happiness." A person who thinks that he would be happy with riches would expect that from life—and so on with each of the other alternatives.

If we analyse the matter deeper, we would realise that happiness is after all an attitude of mind and, more often than not, is not attained even after an individual has attained his immediate objective.

Thus, we see that a man who feels today that he would be happy if he could amass a lakh of rupees would soon hanker after a million as soon as he has made his lakh; he will continue to feel unhappy and restless until he has got his million—

and even after he has done so, he would almost invariably be hankering after many more millions so that happiness will continue to elude him. There is in fact no limit to human ambitions and desires and no wonder, happiness eludes the ordinary mortal.

A realisation of this truth brings us on to the subject of contentment. One who lacks this virtue can never be happy—anyway, for long. I would not go to the length of saying that all ambition must be eschewed merely because one should try to feel contented and happy with whatever one has got or achieved. Far from it. It is very desirable on the other hand one should always aspire after and strive for even greater achievements in his life. All the same, I feel that one's ambition must not be given too overwhelming an importance out of all proportion to one's scheme of life. For the sake of his happiness and peace of mind it is essential that every person should feel contented and thankful for his present circumstances, and that he should not feel too disappointed or make himself too unhappy if he has failed to achieve his ambition fully even after trying his very best.

A rational adjustment of ambition and contentment is, to my experience, the key to human happiness.

Our lives are not lived in a vacuum. In fact, we live in modern times in a very crowded society and our day-to-day happiness depends to a very large extent on our relationship with the people around us, including our near and dear ones. A good deal of human unhappiness arises from the maladjustment of such relationships. There also, a person has to cultivate mental detachment for himself if he is

to avoid unhappiness. What I have found useful personally is that an individual must aim at doing his duty to his fellow-beings so far as lies within his power and he must not expect too fondly that the right thing will invariably be done by the other fellow towards himself in return. If it happens that the other fellow does not do so, he should school himself to be able to shrug his shoulders and consider that the satisfaction of having done his own duty is by itself a sufficient return for his pains.

Every individual develops a characteristic code of conduct towards his fellow-beings. Most people act on a momentary impulse on every occasion. Such haphazard conduct without prior deliberation or self-discipline cannot but lead very often to unpleasant consequences, if not bitterness. I learnt the lesson very early in my life that hard words and unpleasantness rarely, if ever, help you in achieving your ultimate objective. On the other hand, almost invariably they make the objective more difficult to attain. The first golden rule to follow, therefore, is never to lose your temper and use hard words. Secondly, you must try and look at a matter from the other fellow's point of view as well in order to appreciate the latter's difficulties. Lastly, you must be as frank as possible so that the other fellow may understand your point of view and appreciate your own difficulties.

I have invariably found that frankness pays in human relationship. There is much less scope for misunderstanding in the long run if you have placed all your cards on the table as far as practicable. The other fellow understands you better and

is normally frank in his turn so that you can more easily arrive at a reasonable compromise. Except where a matter of principle is involved, a compromise is almost always preferable to an open clash. It enables both the parties to preserve their self-respect and leaves no bitterness behind. So long as compromise involves no surrender of principles or of the dictates of priority, you may and should yield on what are intrinsically non-essentials so far as that may be necessary for the sake of reaching an agreement.

What about evil? Can there be any compromise with that? Certainly not, of course. There is no need to define evil—one's own conscience would invariably indicate what is evil and what is not. Whenever you have the whip-hand, smash up and destroy all evil to the best of your ability. If you can reclaim or reform the evil-doer in the process, you should certainly do so; sympathy, reasonable clemency and a stern warning for the future would in many cases prove effective weapons for the purpose in your hand. If, however, it is necessary for the greater and ultimate good, you have to smash the evil-doer as well, but in this you must not be actuated by a spirit of vengeance or retaliation.

It often happens, however, that you are yourself the undergod when fighting evil. Even then, resist evil to the utmost on every single occasion; and if you can do nothing better, make it at least a little more difficult every time for similar evil deeds to be committed again. If you have succeeded in doing so, you have done your very best and can have a clean conscience.

K. M. CARIAPPA

No one is indispensable. Getting angry when discussing anything with another is a sure sign of the weakness of one's character and is also a "ruse" to hide the weakness of one's case.

Do not trust a man who laughs without any real reason to laugh and a woman who cries without any real reason to cry, when talking to you.

Do not be had for a "mug" by any one who flatters you to your face.

Whatever job is given to you, do not concentrate only on what others can see, but be thorough more behind the scenes.

Serve mankind like a honey bee giving your very best to others and expecting nothing personal in return.

Giving joy to others should be greater joy to you.

Look out for opportunities to serve your country and your people and not for opportunities to gain personal power and wealth.

Learn to see yourself as others see you and do not be sensitive and touchy to things said about you, which may not always be to your liking.

If, by the Grace of God, you occupy a high position of authority in life, do not "live in the clouds," but have your feet on mother-earth. Remember, no individual can ever be permanently perched upon the summit of power and plenty. Use your privilege and authority of high position in life to serve

your fellow-beings kindly, honestly, efficiently, sincerely, gently and yet firmly.

Have courage, character and faith in yourself to tackle problems in your life. Have faith in our people who are really magnificent.

There is nothing impossible in life to achieve provided your aims are sensible and practicable if you have the determination to achieve it. Do not be your own enemy, causing yourself avoidable disillusion and distresses by accepting every "Tom, Dick and Harry" as a person of unimpeachable character and then later finding that he is not. Do not form an opinion of others not on hearsay evidence, but by your own personal observations.

One will not be sorry in life by giving more and taking less.

God, an abstract being, must be in your thoughts always. Fear Him. This will help you in your service to mankind in general.

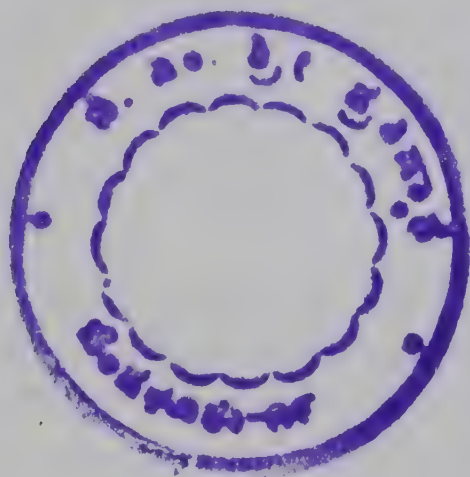
It is wrong to expect one's young generation to be the same as those of your own generation, as each succeeding generation changes with the rapidly changing patterns of society in the world, but one must retain the fundamentals of conduct in the observance of the rules of Society.

Always look out for good things in man—basically man is good. Be kind to your "enemy", but you must have strength—physical or moral.

There are so many opportunities in the world to serve mankind well, but there is so little time to do this. It is a sin of the worst order to waste the precious moments of one's short life on useless pursuits. There is no time to be idle.

Learn to obey—you can then command.
Learn to be a good “servant”—you can then be a good “master”.

There is no end to learning if one has the desire and the modesty to learn throughout one's life not merely by reading, but from the experience and examples of others regardless of their position in life.



C. C. DESAI

When I put to myself the question 'What has life taught me'? I automatically get myself confronted with the counter question 'What life has not taught me?' I suppose this is a natural reaction for a life spread over 58 years and comprising 35 years of active service in the Indian Civil Service which had the reputation of being the best administrative service the world has ever seen.

One of the earliest lessons I learned was to stick to one's target or the set purpose and not to be deflected therefrom by emotions, sentiments or political fervour which sweeps, especially a student, off his feet almost before he knows what is happening.

I was sent, with borrowed capital, to England with the specific purpose of appearing for the Indian Civil Service. There I found myself in the company of three friends, each of whom has become famous in his own way. One was Subhas Bose who had been rusticated from the Calcutta University for the alleged offence of beating a professor—he told me in all confidence that he had not taken part in the beating of the particular professor—and who came to England on promising his family that he would sit for the Indian Civil Service examination, thinking all the time that he would never pass it, and was confronted with a problem when he found that he had been successful! He later became the stormy petrel of the Indian

National Congress and crowned his glorious career by raising the Indian National Army for liberating the country from the bondage of British imperialism and died a hero's death. His memory, as our Netaji, is now enshrined in the hearts of his four hundred million countrymen.

The other two friends were Dilip Kumar Roy, the famous musician, philosopher, writer and follower of Sri Aurobindo Ghosh, and Khitish Prasad Chattopadhyaya, who is now a leading authority on anthropology, especially social anthropology, in India. That was the time when the country was going through a tremendous upheaval under the leadership of Gandhiji, which ultimately led to our Independence contrary to all expectations.

Subhas Bose decided to give up the Indian Civil Service and withdrew from it just before signing the Covenant. Khitish Chattopadhyaya, who was a brilliant scholar and who was preparing for the Indian Civil Service also withdrew his candidature, hoping to dedicate his life to the struggle for freedom. Dilip Roy also decided to drop trying for the Indian Civil Service. The effect of the example, though not the influence of all these three friends—and they were like brothers to me—was that I should also fall in line and give up the idea of studying for the Indian Civil Service. I wrote home on those lines and pat came the reply that politics were not my concern for the time being and that had been chalked out for me. The die was cast and in due course I got through the examination and went into the service from which,

after 35 years, I had the privilege of retiring less than 3 months ago.

The experience of the first day of a new life is always memorable and the impression everlasting. I still vividly remember the day when I joined the Indian Civil Service as an Assistant Commissioner in Buldana (Berar) and found myself in front of a British Deputy Commissioner who was himself a junior officer and who had his first chance of officiation in Buldana. He asked me several questions and I gave the required information; but apparently, I did not say 'Sir' or show sign of strict discipline. Immediate was the reaction of the Deputy Commissioner. His name was R. M. Crofton and he said "Look, this is a matter of discipline. You are a junior officer and it is your duty to say 'Sir' to me until I tell you not to say 'Sir'. And you should exact the same discipline from your subordinates in your own time". Thus began not only a life of service, but also a life of discipline and a life of straight talking. It was a small incident; but I consider it of great moment. It certainly had permanent effect on my conduct, thinking and career. Whenever I joined a new office or organisation, my advice to my officers was that I put greater store by discipline and loyalty than by intelligence or ability; I could make up deficiency in ability, but I could not fight indiscipline or disloyalty.

Crofton also believed in putting a junior officer through the mill. I was asked to go out on tour, but I was given only one small tent. After you leave the camp, the tent is dismantled and taken to the

next place of halt and before it is pitched, it is very nearly evening time. In the meantime I used to arrive at the next stop and had to take my meal in the shade of a tree and to rest under open sky. Ordinarily an officer is provided with two tents; but as I was merely a probationer and a supernumerary officer, the second tent was treated as a luxury and denied to me. A little hardship early in one's career does more good than harm. It hardens you for the hardships of life and life is full of hardships even for the chosen few of the Indian Civil Service. Sometimes I lament the disinclination of our present-day youth to accept these hardships or to think that they do good to them; they feel that such ideas are a fad on the part of men of the older generation.

There are many lessons which I have learned from time to time, or from situation to situation. For instance, we are told that flattery is bad, that good people do not like or permit flattery and that flattery is immediately detected. My experience, however, is that no one, not even the tallest amongst us, is impervious to flattery. I would go further and say that even God Almighty likes to be flattered. You can always get away with flattery except where it is too blatant or crude. I have always found that flattery is good, useful and necessary and that, on the whole, it pays more often than not.

It is often a moot question whether a diplomat is sent to lie abroad! The answer is perhaps both 'Yes' and 'No'. It would be wrong to say that a diplomat is never required to tell untruth or to

deliberately indulge in equivocation in the discharge of his duty abroad. Equally it is untrue to say that you must never take a diplomat at his face value. In both Colombo and Karachi, I found that I was more convincing and impressive when I told the truth, unhedged by reservations, and when I put all my cards on the table, rather than when I beat about the bush or indulged in pleasing assurances. You must remember that if both sides indulge in half truths or untruths—which is sometimes mistaken as successful diplomacy—you do not get anywhere, you do not solve any problem, you do not succeed in dispelling the clouds of misunderstanding. I do not propose to refer to individual incidents for this is neither the time nor the place for it.

In my long official career I had occasion to serve some of our greatest men in the country. The three names that come uppermost in my mind are: Ragavendra Rao, a first-class nationalist and a renowned administrator who was mainly responsible for the high calibre of members of the Indian Civil Service who worked in the old Central Provinces and Berar; Shanmukham Chetty, again a first-class brain and perhaps the best Finance Minister we have had since Independence; and, last but not the least, Sardar Patel, who was Minister for States when I was his Additional Secretary, Principal Secretary being V. P. Menon. There was one uncommon thing common between the three of them—and that was their sound judgment of men, selection of good people for key posts and reposing of complete confidence in them so that they could work in their own way. The result was that men

who worked under them felt happy in slaving for them and always regarded that any harm to the reputation of the boss also meant loss of one's own reputation or prestige. Nothing brings out the best in one so much as the feeling that one enjoys the confidence of the person for whom one is working. It is the lack of this confidence between the Ministers and the Secretaries that is largely responsible for the present deterioration in the standards of administration about which one hears so much in Delhi and State Capitals.

But the most important lesson of life has been the one embodied in a couplet by an author whose name I forget, but which reads as follows:

“Be to their faults a little blind,
Be to their virtues very kind.”

I first read this couplet in the *Hitavada* of Nagpur which had it as its motto. I do not know whether it is still there or not; perhaps it is still there. How often have I remembered these words and they have moulded my attitude towards a problem, a situation or a personality. Ordinarily we are apt to look at the dark side of a friend, relation or problem. We forget that there may be another side to the picture. We do not make allowance for another point of view; and that leads to misgivings, misunderstandings and misconceptions. Timely reminder of these two simple lines of wisdom has so often saved rupture of a friendship or a wrong idea being formed of a relation. This lesson is useful in life, both private and public. In fact it is useful wherever there is scope for misunderstanding. Constant reminder of this thought

creates in one the faculty of putting oneself in the position of the other person. It is not always easy, especially where passions are aroused, but it is never unfailing for removing misunderstandings and for putting every matter in its true and correct perspective. Once that is ensured, there should be no room for prejudice, malice, mischief, ill-will or conflict. What a difference it would make to life if everyone were to approach another person with the set object of being to his faults a little blind and of being to his virtues very kind. Similarly, how few of us remember the virtues of our friends as against their faults. How often do we stress the seamier side of life as against the rosier. Logically and intuitively, this looks so simple; yet when the time comes, it is so difficult and, more often than not, we lose sight of it until harm is done and our eyes are opened—sometimes opened too late. However, I have felt that nothing helps one in making a success of one's mission so much as adherence, or even an attempt at adherence, to this noble principle of conduct of life.

The last lesson I have learned is the one relating to the reality of Death. That everyone is destined to die is known to all of us and is really no lesson. And yet, I did not know what death really is until it affected me in domestic life a few months ago. I could hardly believe that a person who talks sensibly and normally can, in a moment, lapse into eternal silence; that a person who has a deep and enduring conception of possession could suddenly and in the twinkling of an eye leave everything behind as if the person never bothered or worried about these worldly things ever in the past; and

that what is life and light at 10 A.M. can be absolute death and darkness at 5 past 10 A.M. It may be childish to say that even at 58 I was not so conscious of the unreality of life and that I should have to wait a life spread over two generations to realise both the reality of death and the unreality of life.



M. C. CHAGLA

At what point of time in a man's life should he look behind and not ahead? When should he say to himself that he should now sum up and weigh the lessons which he has derived, admit his mistakes and misconceptions, bring about a reconciliation between himself and his surroundings and achieve peace and contentment within himself? There is no such final or definitive point of time. While life continues, the struggle and the discontent, the aspirations and frustrations continue and give to life its quality, its zest and also its weariness.

We are living at such a pace and under such pressure that we have no time to pause and think, or, as an English poet has said, 'to stand and stare.' For the good of our soul, I think it is necessary from time to time to take stock, to count our gains and losses (not necessarily material but also moral and emotional) and to ask ourselves what life has taught us.

The longer I live the more I realise the supreme importance of tolerance. Tolerance is a quality which is getting rarer and rarer in this world. The conflicting ideologies to which men are wedded are getting sharper every day, and we are getting surer of our own brand of faith. Honest divergence of opinion is becoming an impossible achievement. We are so elated with our own righteousness that anyone who dares to differ from

us must be, to say the least, either depraved or a dangerous maniac. And professing democrats can be as intolerant as believers in totalitarianism.

The true significance of tolerance is the belief in human dignity and the value and importance of the individual, the most important article in the democratic faith. The true democrat says that he can never be sure of being right, the possibility of error is infinite. He must therefore permit all flowers to bloom, he must permit every one to experiment with his life. Truth can only emerge from clash of ideas. To crush or curb any is the greatest sin against light.

Tolerance also means sympathy and understanding. The harshest and cruellest thing in life is to judge, and I say this although it has been my profession for nearly 20 years to judge. What right have I to pass judgments on men's conduct when I don't know all the circumstances that actuated that conduct? How do I know how I would have behaved if I were in identically the same situation? It is infinitely better to try and understand, and with understanding comes sympathy.

Another aspect of tolerance is to attach no importance to the caste or community to which a man belongs, or to the colour of his skin. We have a habit of attaching labels to human beings and then judging them. He is a Hindu or he is a Muslim and therefore he must be such and such. He is a Brahmin and so he must be an intellectual—he is a Harijan and so he must be unintelligent. Even in a secular state we are class and caste conscious. We will not take a man for what he is. We want to take revenge upon him for the sins of

his forefathers committed hundreds and thousands of years ago. We may proudly proclaim equality before the law. It is more necessary to believe in equality of men in the eyes of God.

Life has also taught me or should teach me humility. We are so proud of our success. We attribute it to our wonderful qualities, our ability, industry and a hundred other things. The only thing we forget is the important part chance or the contingent has played in bringing about our success. We do not realise, or do not choose to realise, that there are hundreds and thousands with far superior talent to ours who fall by the wayside because they did not have our opportunities or that circumstances conspired against them. Pride and arrogance are not merely the precursors of an impending fall, but to my mind they bear witness to an essential cheapness in the man. The most difficult thing to withstand is success. Alcohol may be bad for the bodily health—success can poison and corrode the soul.

Life, whether a man is successful or otherwise from the worldly point of view, must have a certain quality and that quality can only come from integrity. Integrity does not mean mere freedom from corruption. That is very easy to achieve. I would not think of myself as something wonderful because I am honest and do not accept bribes. That is the least that is expected of me. But integrity is both a quality of the mind and of the soul. Intellectual integrity is the capacity to be objective and dispassionate in the heat and dust of battle and in the hurly-burly of everyday existence. This is an age of slogans and headlines. One must learn to

think for oneself and one must have the courage of drawing the logical conclusions of one's thoughts. These conclusions may be very uncomfortable to oneself or to the high and mighty in the land. But if one has integrity one must adhere to them.

Integrity of the soul is the dearest and most precious possession that a man can have. It is his faith. It is the star by the light of which he steers his life in fair or stormy weather. I am not a religious man—I think on the whole in the history of humanity religion has done more harm than good. But that does not mean that we must not have some principle, some ideal, some light to which we can hold out our hands. We may refuse to bend our knee in any church, temple or mosque, but in our fundamental loneliness we must be able to turn to some source outside ourselves to whom we can turn for guidance, to whom we can carry our fears and our sorrows and who can supply the touchstone by which we can judge our actions.

S. S. VASAN

Looking back on a fairly eventful career, I have come to realise, more and more, that life is largely like a game of cards—success or failure is not entirely a matter of fate or fortune, nor is it entirely the result of personal initiative or the lack of it. There is a mixture of both luck and pluck, in varying proportions. One may say, broadly, that the cards held by a player represent his “fate”, within whose framework he has to exercise his “freewill.” If a player happens to hold one single suit of cards, from top to bottom, he is bound to win, even if he is not intelligent. He is like the imbecile son of a millionaire, a nincompoop! But such a piece of luck is very unlikely, especially in these days of death-duty and wealth-tax!

But the analogy of the game of cards cannot be pressed too far. Life is not as simple as that, with just two factors to reckon with. Life is so full of unexpected and imponderable factors that one cannot possibly foresee all of them and provide for them. It is indeed the magnitude and variety of these unknown contingencies that has perhaps led the poet to proclaim:

*“There is a Divinity that shapes our ends
Rough-hew them how we will.”*

In my own case that Divinity was my mother. I lost my father when I was yet a child, and the task of rearing me fell to her, alone and unaided. Peo-

ple who would have women to compete with men in all spheres of activity, in order to establish their *equality* with men, seem to forget the real *superiority* of women in the unique sphere of bringing up children worthy of the soil.

Though I was an only child, my mother did not pamper me; evidently she did not believe in smotherhood! For one thing, she could not afford to. The result was that I was left largely to my own resources. I think this helped me a great deal to be self-reliant. Even as a youngster I had the writer's itch, and I used to write short stories in Tamil, publish them myself and hawk them myself on railway platforms from one end to the other. Thereafter, I hit upon the idea of running a magazine of my own. With that idea I bought a monthly magazine which was on the verge of dying. I converted it later on into a Weekly, and that was the beginning of the *Ananda Vikatan*.

In those days the language of Tamil magazines was highly literary and artificial. The result was that they could be understood only by the learned. I said to myself that that was not the way to attract a large number of subscribers. I wanted that the reading matter should be such as to be understood even by my mother who, though a fairly good scholar in Sanskrit, was not able to follow the high-flown literary Tamil of those days. An unknown young writer, R. Krishnamurti, was the answer to my prayer for a "popular" writer and I made him my Editor. He wrote under the pen-name of *Kalki*, a name which became famous throughout Tamil Nad.

Apart from the simplicity of its language, another innovation that I made in the *Ananda Vikatan* was the introduction of cartoons—an innovation that was not made even by the English language papers of those days in India. Here again I was lucky in having been able to spot out the genius of an unknown youngster working as a clerk or something in far-off Bombay. He was T. R. Mahalingam (*Mali*), one of the most brilliant cartoonists of our country. It is sad to reflect that he was cut off in his prime.

One of the important things that I have learned in the course of my life is the unfairness, if not indeed the danger, of making hasty judgments about people. I had to fight out a legal issue in Bombay, at great cost, in connection with the release of a picture of mine, called "Mangala". I had a very great stake in the success of that issue because I had made commitments about that picture in the State of Bombay. Sri Morarji Desai was Chief Minister at that time and I thought that he was the most implacable enemy of the Cinema. And what he spoke in public sometimes about the evil aspects of the Cinema was not in any way conducive to allay my misgivings on this matter! But when I had the pleasure of making his personal acquaintance later on, I found that my judgment of him was thoroughly wrong. I found that his apparent pugnacity was only on the surface, and that he was in no way ill-disposed towards the Cinema. Of such a person we say in Tamil that he is like a jack fruit—all thorns outside, and all sweetness inside!

That leads me on to another valuable lesson that life has taught me—the golden rule of compromise in the conduct of life. We find that wherever we look around us, in any sphere of human activity, be it social, economic, or political, there is always a clash of interests and ideas. No particular vested interest or group is allowed to have its own way, unfettered. It is only by a series of mutual adjustments and accommodations that life can go on smoothly. It is only the fanatic, the lunatic and the dictator that can be uncompromising. It is said of Hitler, for instance, that he was a non-smoker. Well and good. But he was not content with practising this virtue by himself. He would not tolerate any other person smoking in his presence. The result was that some of his colleagues in the Cabinet who were tobacco addicts had a dreadful time when they were closetted together with Hitler for a considerable time! In striking contrast is Prime Minister Nehru. As a disciple of Mahatmaji, he can certainly appreciate the value of personal virtues, but I don't think he makes a fetish of non-smoking.

Social life will be impossible without this attitude of "live and let live," and tolerance of other people's foibles. I should like to touch upon one example of this kind of self-righteous intolerance. We have often heard the criticism that unnecessary and irrelevant songs are introduced into a motion picture story. I may say at once that this criticism itself is irrelevant—that is to say, beside the point. It is beside the point because the straight presentation of a story is not the only purpose of a cinema. It is, on the other hand, designed as a

composite entertainment, in which music is almost a must. The importance of music will be apparent if one considers the presentation of a news-reel on the screen. The only object of a news-reel is to present the news and nothing else. Why then should a plain news report be always accompanied by music—even in ludicrous contexts? Surely, no railway disaster ever occurs with a background of orchestral music to sustain the tragedy! It is frankly a concession to popular taste. A motion picture would be just nothing if it were not popular.

No reformer can ever hope to carry out all the items of his programme completely. It is only an undertaker who would be allowed to carry out his object completely and get away with it. Others will have to adapt themselves to public opinion, to compromise. Even the supreme head of Soviet Russia had to concede, "Let a hundred flowers bloom and a hundred opinions flourish"—this attitude, Panchshila, dynamic neutrality, etc. are all but different facets of the golden principle of compromise. A leader must stoop to conquer. In order to redeem humanity, even God is said to have come down to earth, to take an Avatar, which literally means "descent."

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There is a verse in the third discourse in the Bhagawad Gita: परस्परं भावयन्तः श्रेयः परमवाप्स्यथ । Mrs. Annie Besant and Babu Bhagwandasji have translated it: "Thus nourishing one another ye shall reap supreme good."

Life is a great task-master. None has so far found it comfortable and till the end of existence none is likely to give another verdict. It, through its vicissitudes, goes on teaching its hard and difficult lessons, whether one intends to learn them or not. All its emphasis is against comfort and career, though human beings as we are, we cannot abandon our longing for them. In its march it crosses through forests of brambles and wades through storms and tussles; and all these leave behind them not only their memories but some morals also. It is, therefore, rather a difficult thing to accommodate within the space of a single article all that life teaches one. I shall not attempt the impossible and shall confine myself to mentioning one of the most impressive lessons that I have learnt in my relations with the objective world.

The first impulse of an immature mind is 'self first'. This immaturity is not dependent upon age or years, nor sophistication or knowledge. It persists and persists, and even in persons who have reached great philosophic heights it hides in a corner and manifests itself in periods of crisis or moments of unawareness. Greatest among us have not been able to shake it off either in the past or in

the present. Leaders of Society in the past have tried to apply all kinds of remedies. They invented demons. They held out threats of Hell-Fire. They worked upon faith of men and sought refuge in the wrath of God. They developed moral codes and tried to work them out through religion and education. They sang high praises for the martyrdom of men and spoke in high terms about those who worked for noble causes. They created institutions of caste. They formed themselves into combinations and called themselves nations. They tried to exercise selfishness, then to sublimate and finally to limit it or curb it. It has been a battle valiantly fought. It is, however, not still won.

Why? Fear of perdition and temptations of heaven are hardly the weapons that can tackle this question. The only two weapons that can do it are, first, knowledge of the basic laws and, second, action born of such knowledge. That is one of the main purposes of the objective human existence and that is the purposeful lesson life teaches us. The whole creation is so ordained. It works on a fundamental principle of mutual co-operation, परस्परं भावयन्तः “Nourish one another”. Conscious participation in that process is called ‘love’. Every such act of conscious participation produces an inner reaction. It is so pleasant. It is so dynamic. It produces a sensation of self-fulfilment. It spreads the rays of a new light to the deepest depths of human heart and to the farthest corners of one’s self. Consciousness finds confirmation in consciousness.

I remember one incident. My town was infected with an epidemic of plague. The town was

cleared of its inhabitants. But some people with nowhere to go or no means to go, remained behind. Amongst them was a poor woman. She was shifted to a quarantine. The Ruler of the place was on a visit to the place. It was night time. The place was infested with malarial mosquitoes. His instinctive reaction was to give her a mosquito-net. The incident got wide publicity, fully deserved. It produced in me, however, a different kind of feeling. I thought to myself: "Is this not a superficial way of dealing with the problem?" Man loves to operate on the plane of sentiment, and if he is a little more developed, on the plane of emotion. It is certainly desirable that higher and nobler impulses of life are expressed even at those levels. But they have only a momentary, if not a fleeting, sway over one's mind. The concrete foundations of love lie in knowledge and action born of such knowledge. Then only can the sentiment and emotion embellish the whole activity, adore it and help in fulfilling it. As I considered the matter further I realised that the inherent reaction of the Ruler was the very important factor. Instead of moving away from the plague-infested area, he remained with his people and without fear of being a victim, moved about boldly amongst them.

I also remember another incident. I had gone to attend a meeting. It was time for supper and a very poor peasant invited me, full of love, to take meals with him. I could notice a kind of embarrassment on the part of the people who were present at the time and who knew his condition. It was only when I reached the place that I realised that I had put my host, in accepting the invitation, to incal-

culable inconvenience. In fact, there was not a utensil in which he could serve me. Such was his poverty. But nevertheless he felt pleased that I had accepted the invitation.

This elementary code was a part of our social life. The two World Wars and the educational system has changed our outlook a lot. While we are thinking in terms of rich social philosophies, really, we are getting more and more individualistic with the result that the art of capturing the hearts of people is becoming an obsolete commodity.

The whole course of experience has brought me to this conclusion. I have landed myself into inconceivable difficulties whenever I have failed in observing this rule, whereas to the extent I have confined to it, I have been helped on and on.

A constant endeavour to find out ways and means of rendering such assistance reveals how little the other person expects from us. Sometimes a warm welcome, sometimes a word of encouragement, a word of consolation—is all that a person needs. Whatever the primary reaction of the man who confronts us, the experience of 24 years of close association with people has revealed one truth. He gives his heart and mind and soul to those who approach him in a spirit of परस्परं भावयन्तः।

A harsh expression, premature or harsh judgment, ill-will or lack of goodwill, criticism behind his back, lack of realisation of the other man's point of view or a punitive attitude can work disaster, though the aim may be good.

I remember another incident. It was May 1939. Gandhiji was in Rajkot in connection with Rajkot Satyagraha. It was my rule to spend the whole day

with him from early morning to the time he went to bed. Once, as I was walking with him in his routine walk, I found him somewhat reserved and dry. I conveyed my feeling to Mahadevbhai and Mahadevbhai gave me some idea of what was worrying him. Gandhiji was told by the Dewan of Rajkot that whatever my reputation during my period of legal practice, I was not so clean. He actually had told Gandhiji that I had once produced some doubtful material in a civil case. Gandhiji would not ordinarily have believed the Dewan, Shri Virawala. But a lawyer was sitting by his side at the time and Gandhiji felt that that lawyer was supporting Shri Virawala's statement. Gandhiji was always keen on knowing the past of the men he worked with. He was generous to excuse them for their faults; but he, nevertheless, always wanted to be informed. I asked Gandhiji not to worry about it and look into the matter himself. He sent for the lawyer and satisfied himself that there was nothing in it. But I was not happy with myself. I asked myself, what was it that made the lawyer support such a thing. A search within me revealed that I had been once unfair to him and a little cussed with him. The moment I realised this then the whole incident presented a different picture. All thought of securing an apology vanished and with it the anger and malice too. The incident taught me to be more and more cautious. It added to my strength which no apology could have done. In a recent case in my zeal for cleansing the organisation I transgressed this law. I antagonised not only the individual but a good part of the Provincial organisation, thus delaying the fulfilment of the object I had in view.

A constant watch over our hidden propensities, and a constant endeavour to reach out a helping hand wherever and whenever an opportunity presents itself contain in them the seeds of one's 'supreme good.' They are the fountain springs of family life and social life. They express a language different from the language of the market place or political preaching because they are based upon principles different from the principles of contractual relationship and selfish national approaches. For that very reason, the bonds of relationship that we see in the market place or in politics are so very loose and transitory. If we aim at a more sustained and more enduring relationship that relationship must be based upon values more enduring.

From that point every man that comes in touch with us, every living creature that is depending upon us, becomes an important medium. It has been my endeavour, in all moods and states to utilise this medium for that 'supreme good'. I try to look upon those who come to me as messengers in a way. I love to listen to them, to understand their point of view, to place myself in their position and realise and appreciate their feelings and hardships, and even when I feel helpless I try to do whatever I can in the nature of verbal consolation I can give to them. I have invariably found that whenever I have tried sincerely, I have been compensated for my labour, more than I deserved, in peace and happiness. It is, however, so difficult to maintain this. Whenever the immaturity within me interferes, the opportunity slips out of my hand. Then it is always I, who am the loser, and not the other man.

JAYA CHAMARAJA WADIYAR

The Editor of the 'Bhavan's Journal' has done me the honour of asking me to contribute to the series—"What life has taught me." I feel it a privilege to have been counted worthy enough to contribute to this section. It is not without considerable diffidence that I have accepted this invitation to be enrolled among the most eminent sons and daughters of this country who have expressed their views. But this diffidence was laid to rest by the generous tone of the letter. I shall therefore as best as I can, embark on this topic.

What is life? And, what does it mean to me?—are the questions that have been posed. I shall try to answer them as candidly as I can. These answers have been suggested to me by the cultural milieu in which I have been brought up and the precious spiritual legacy of which we are heirs in this country.

What life means or ought to mean flashed across my mind when I first scanned the very first verse of the *Gita*.¹ The words Dharmakshetra and Kurukshetra and their co-existence in the verse forcibly brought to my mind that life is the field of war between good and evil and that we are called upon to put forth energetic endeavours to see that the good and the true triumph over the forces of evil. Two other significant words the meanings of which

1. *Dharmakṣetre kurukṣetre samavetā yuyutsavaḥ/
Māmakāḥ pāṇḍavāścaiva kimakurvata sañjaya//*

swam into my mind were Kshetra and Kshetrajna. Kshetra (the body of ours) is the field of operation of the spirit within. It is where the drama of the human soul is enacted. The whole tenor of the teaching seems to me to be this, that our body and mind must be made the vehicles for the expression of the spirit within. The Kshetra in which the spirit of man has to express itself is a Dharma Kshetra, that is, a field where the battle of righteousness has to be fought relentlessly. The inveterate forces that have to be fought against are internal in character. They are briefly according to the *Gita*, lust (*kama*), wrath (*krodha*) and greed (*lobha*).

Our personality is a fabric woven of the three strands of *sattva* (essence), *rajas* (energy) and *tamas* (inertia). *Rajas* is the dynamic element, *tamas* is the static element. *Rajas* generates forces of change, *tamas* tends towards changelessness and conservation. *Tamas* is the thesis; *rajas* is anti-thesis. Conflict is the result of the one being pitted against the other. This is the Kurukshetra or the field of conflict. It is only when the conflict is faced with knowledge and power generated by *sattva* that the *kurukshetra* becomes converted into *dharmakshetra*. In voluntarily ranging oneself on the side of those battling for righteousness, we belong to God and become 'His Own'.

In this *kurukshetra* we have to develop into happy warriors under the captaincy of our souls in tune with the supreme spirit. How this is to be accomplished is the rest of the story in the *Gita*. As of other things in life, here too the knowledge

of the technique of living is a prime necessity. The *Gita* enjoins that the knowledge of this technique is imparted to us by those who have actually lived in accordance with it and have discovered the laws of inner life. These laws are, to use Kant's language, categorical imperatives which ought to be obeyed. To use a Sanskrit term, they are "*sastra*"; (*sasanat sastramityahuh*) and so called because they lay down the laws to be obeyed. If we do not have the basis of *Sastra*, we will be left like a ship without a rudder on a stormy and turbulent sea. How real this is can be experienced by any one who has suffered the '*crises de conscience*'; the crisis of the soul that modern man frequently suffers from. Arjuna evidently went through such a crisis.

Our sages and seers, prophets and priests seem to have had a vision of the prime purpose of life² and they clung to it without wavering. This is the reason why all our literature—secular and sacred, has hitched its wagon to the star of Moksha. Western observers remark that Moksha is an obsession with us. It is too true to be discarded. In the light of this goal of life all the other avocations of life are to be ordered. The battle of *kurukshetra* has to be fought here and now and the victory has to be won.³ '*Sastra*' as understood here was to be its guide. The '*Sastra*' was to fortify each man in performing his duty according to the best of his ability, without fear or favour or hope of reward. This was the help it was expected to render. It does not mean that the performance of duty does not

2. *Paramapuruṣārtha*

3. *Ihaiva tairjitaḥ sargo yeṣāṃ sāmye sthitam manaḥ Gītā—V—19.*

bring its fruit. It does; but the doer must refrain from concerning himself with it. Gandhiji pointed out that the one who is obsessed with the result of what he does loses his nerve in action. It all means that one ought to accept the authority of the scriptures in determining what ought to be done and what ought not to be done.⁴

The reward thus would come of its own without the asking. The warrior who does his duty well, the agriculturist who skilfully does his work as cultivator and the king who rules his subjects righteously do their respective duties and reap the reward of work. Do your duty without expectation of reward is the greatest lesson that one learns from life. Without it life becomes wearisome and insipid. This is the message of the *Gita*; and, what a message it is for our age! Life has to be lived in a spirit of detachment and dedication. Those who have lived so have reached the highest pinnacle is the belief of the present writer. There is nothing more interesting than to achieve the inner vision (*Atma-darsana*) through re-ordering the external conditions of life by adjusting them to the internal conditions. The inner and the outer must coalesce. *Pravritti* and *Nivritti*, action and meditation, attachment to the highest and detachment of all that detracts from it is the much needed lesson. Life has acquired a meaning for this author because of this teaching. He has endeavoured to seek its verification in the life that has been given to him.

4. *Tasmācchāstram pramāṇam te kāryākāryavyavasthitau/
jñātvā śāstravidhānōktam karma kartumihārhasi/ /*

(*Bhagavadgītā*: 16—24)

A Vedic bard has declared this meaning of life and its message in the following famous stanza:

“I have reached that One Conscious Being effulgent with divine light and beyond the limits of darkness. Knowing Him alone one attains that state which is beyond the reach of Death. There is no alternative course to it.”⁵

So in this life, here and now, by making the *kurukshetra* of the body the *dharma-kshetra*, the truth of immortality could be experienced. The content of this immortality is the realisation of the supreme identity of the individual soul with the supreme soul. All else is Maya or unreal, says Vidyaranya in his *Panchadasi*.⁶ The philosophical implications of this truth have been expressed thus in this work. Says Vidyaranya in the *Panchadasi*: “In the ‘munja’ grass the delicate internal part can with care be extracted from its coarse external covering. Similarly, if the Atma be differentiated from the three bodily sheaths by persons who have undergone the necessary mental training, the Atma is seen to be a Parabrahman.”⁷

What causes births and deaths and limitations and super-impositions are our desires. Remove them and the real transcendent is revealed within. The ‘*mithya pratyaya*’ or false knowledge must disappear. But how? Through the dawn of right knowledge or *jnana*. How can this come? The *Panchadasi*

5. *Vedāhametaṁ puruṣhaṁ mahāntaṁ ādityavarṇaṁ tamaśaḥ parastāt tameva viditvātimṛtyumeti nānyaḥ panthā vidyate ayanāya/ /*

6. *Pāñchadaśī* I-16-17

(a) “*Māyābimbō vaśīkṛtya tām syātsarvajña Īśvaraḥ*”/

(b) “*Avidyā vaśagastvanyastadvaicītryādanekadhā*”/

7. *Ibid.* 1-42: *Yathā muñjadiṣīkaivamātmā yuktyā samuddhṛtaḥ/ Śarīratritayāddhīraiḥ param Brahmaiva jāyate/ /*

answers: "As a small insect falling into the current of a river passes from one pool to another and does not find a resting place, so the *jiva* passes from one birth to another without finding rest or peace. But if any kind-hearted man seeing the miserable plight of the insect in the rapid current places it under the shade of a tree on the bank, it escapes the everrunning current of water. Similarly, the *jiva* can escape the continuous recurring births and deaths, if any man of realization (*tattva-darsi*) shows him the path to freedom and peace."⁸ Thus can the *jiva* be redeemed from the pangs of the deceitful world.

As an aid to reaching the goal of Brahman, *vichara* (proper analysis of spirit and matter) and *sama-darsana* (looking on all equally) are necessary. Those who are unable to do so cannot meditate on Brahman. And, belief in a teacher who is an adept in spiritual life is necessary to abstract his (the disciple's) mind from external things and concentrate on the internal. Then alone will this false knowledge vanish. India's tradition in this matter is expressed in the *Gita* when it says "that the seeker must learn Truth by discipleship, investigation and service and that the wise, the seers of truth, will instruct in matters of wisdom."⁹

8. *Pāñchadaśī* I-30-31

*Nadyām kītā ivāvartādāvartāntaramāśu te/
vrajanto janmano janma labhante naiva nirvṛtim/ /
Satkarmaparipākāt te karuṇānidhinoddhṛtāḥ/
prāpya tīratarucchāyām viśrāmyanti yāthā sukham / /*

9. *Tadviddhipraṇipātena paripraśnena sevayā
upadekṣyanti te jñānam jñāninaḥ tatvadarśinaḥ (Gītā—IV-34)
Caranam pavitram vitatam purāṇam
yena pūtāḥ tarati duṣkṛtāni
tena pavitreṇa śuddhena pūtāḥ
ati pāpmānam arātim tarema/ /*

Such is the purpose and meaning of life I have learnt. It is the seeking of the treasures of the inner life that has appealed to me more than external happenings of life. The external life is empty, stale and unprofitable without the development of the internal life of man. The recitation of the *Avadhuta Gita* has taught me that the only thing I can do in this life is to humbly watch, pray and wait for the unsolicited grace of God which like the gentle breeze bloweth where it listeth. This is the raft that enables one to cross the ocean of fear, uncertainty and despair. I know no other. (*nanyah pantha ayanaya vidyate*)—God's grace alone would bring us the necessary wisdom.¹⁰

This faith which has nourished our Seers and Sages down the centuries has been brought home to me in my humble attempts to seek the inner harmony.

10. *Īśvarānugrahād-eva puṁsām advaita-vāsanā mahadbhaya-paritrāṇāt viprāṇām upajāyate/ /*



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One of the major schemes of the Bhavan is the publication of the HISTORY AND CULTURE OF THE INDIAN PEOPLE in 10 volumes. So far seven volumes have been published viz., (1) The Vedic Age (2) The Age of Imperial Unity (3) Classical Age (4) The Age of Imperial Kanauj (5) The Struggle for Empire (6) The Delhi Sultanate and (7) British Paramountcy and Indian Renaissance. The remaining volumes will follow at an interval of 8-10 months. This is considered to be the first successful attempt at re-writing the History of India by her own sons on a very exhaustive basis.

MUNSHI SARASWATI MANDIR

An Institute of Culture with a Library consisting of over 65,000 volumes including many Indological volumes, Museum consisting of old and valuable palm leaf manuscripts, coins, paintings etc.

VALLABHJI RAMJI BALPUSTAKALAYA

A Library for Children with facilities for indoor games, educational films etc.

BHARATIYA KALA KENDRA

The Kala Kendra is devoted to the development of Drama, Dance and Music. The Kala Kendra produces dramas and dance ballets in English as well as in Hindi, Gujarati and Marathi to encourage amateur talents. An Inter-Collegiate Dramatic competition, in several languages, is also sponsored by it every year for the same purpose. Ideal facilities for these activities are provided in the Bhavan auditorium—the Kanji Khetsey Sabhagriha.

BHARATIYA SANGIT SHIKSHAPITH

An Academy of Indian Classical Music, affiliated to the Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyalaya, Lucknow, which is recognised by the Central Government for courses leading to the Bachelor of Music Degree.

BHARATIYA NARTAN SHIKSHAPITH

An Academy of Dance for teaching the four systems of Indian dancing, viz. Manipuri, Kathak, Kathakali and Bharata Natyam.

BOOK UNIVERSITY

Publishes books, ancient and modern, at low price (Rs. 2.50 each) to make available the best literature and classics of India and the world to the common man in an easily understandable form. So far 115 titles have been published and over 10,00,000 copies have in all been sold. Some of the books have also been published in Hindi, Marathi, Bengali and Tamil. A new one-rupee Series has also been started.

PRAKASHAN MANDIR

Apart from our HISTORY and BOOK UNIVERSITY SERIES, this department also publishes the results of the research and other activities of the various Mandirs of the Bhavan and books of cultural value. Its publications include:

Bharatiya Vidya Series: Critical editions of texts, translations and original works of research in Indology—in Sanskrit and English. Published volumes 22.

Singhi Jain Series: Critical editions of ancient works and manuscripts connected with Jain religion and literature. Published volumes 52.

The Glory that was Gurjaradesa: A comprehensive study of Gujarat in 7 volumes. Published volumes 2.

Munshi Sahitya: Social novels, historical plays, biographical works of Munshiji and Smt. Lilavati Munshi in Gujarati and English, the copyright whereof has been kindly gifted by them to the Bhavan. Published volumes 80.

JOURNALS

Bharatiya Vidya: An Indological research quarterly in English started in 1943. Published volumes 22.

Bhavan's Journal: An English Fortnightly devoted to life, literature and culture started in August 1954. Present circulation 50,000 copies. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.

Bharati: A Hindi Fortnightly started in August 1956. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.

Samarpan: A Gujarati Fortnightly started in November 1959. Annual Subscription Rs. 6.50.

DEPARTMENT OF PRINTING

Bhavan's press where all its publications and periodicals are printed and where practical training in printing is given to the students of the Bhavan's College of Journalism, Advertising and Printing.

COLLEGE OF JOURNALISM, ADVERTISING & PRINTING

An Institution for providing systematic instruction in Journalism, Advertising, Sales Promotion, Public Relations and Printing.

M. M. COLLEGE OF ARTS & N. M. INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE

The College was opened by Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel in June 1946. It is affiliated to the Bombay University for courses of studies leading to B.A., B.Sc., M.A., M.Sc., and Ph.D. degrees.

BHAVAN'S COLLEGE OF ARTS & SCIENCE, DAKOR

The College was opened by Dr. Jivraj Mehta, Chief Minister, Gujarat, in June 1962. It is affiliated to the Gujarat University for courses of studies leading to B.A. & B.Sc. degrees.

SARDAR PATEL COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING

The College was opened in June 1962 for courses of studies leading to B.E. (Civil, Mechanical and Electrical) degree. It is affiliated to the Bombay University.

BHAVAN'S SCHOOL, NEW DELHI

The School coaches students for the Cambridge School Leaving Examination, the medium of instruction being English. Sanskrit and Hindi are compulsory subjects. Music, Indian dancing and painting are also taught to the students.

BHAVAN'S ACADEMY OF LANGUAGES, NEW DELHI AND BOMBAY

The Academy teaches four foreign languages, viz., German, Russian, French and Spanish.

MUNGALAL GOENKA SANSKRIT TRUST

The income from this Trust goes to support the Post-graduate and Research Department of the Bhavan.

ASSOCIATED BODIES

Sanskrit Vishva Parishad, Bharatiya Stree Seva Sangh, Bombay Astrological Society.

13491 *ABOUT THIS BOOK*

SOME EMINENT PERSONALITIES of the present day, leaders of thought and action, speak in this book about the lessons they have learnt from their eventful lives. Each one of them, who has attained success and celebrity in a particular field, looks back reflectively on the course of his life, on his failures and achievements. It will be seen from their accounts that their lives were marked by an interplay of fate and circumstance and that a kind Providence gave them the wisdom and the opportunity to surmount obstacles in their way. The lessons that they have learnt from their lives are only amplifications of the central maxim that "where there is Dharma, there is Victory", that there are no short cuts to success and that it cannot be achieved bypassing the eternal laws of morality.

The contributors, who are from various sections of contemporary life, write with a revealing candour and, in not a few cases, are unsparing in the criticism of themselves. Projecting the situations, they keep their personalities in the background, sustain interest and take care not to be boastful.